

Harwich Water Department
BOARD OF WATER COMMISSIONERS
Meeting on Thursday, August 13th, 2015

Present: Chairman Allin Thompson, Vice Chair Danette Gonsalves, Clerk Gary Carreiro, Superintendent Dan Pelletier, Town Administrator Christopher Clark, Selectman Mike MacAskill, Secretary Tracey Alves

Chairman Thompson called the meeting to order at 7:07 a.m.

The purpose of this meeting is to discuss how the town will advance with wastewater.

Town Administrator Clark began by commenting that he was of the opinion that the Water Commission would like to retain more control and governance over water. Clark offered that perhaps the Board of Water Commissioners would be open to accepting wastewater to form a Board of Water & Wastewater where the governance could fall to the newly formed Board. It could be discussed whether Board members be elected or appointed with the preference being elected. Also mentioned was that the Board of Selectmen would like to have control of setting the rates and defer to the Board in an advisory capacity only. Town Administrator Clark recommended that the Water Commission meet with the Selectmen to sit down and find a viable middle ground.

Chair Thompson feels that yes, the ideal make-up is water and wastewater but the clean water side needs to be protected. Wastewater would devour clean water's funding especially if the enterprise fund is eliminated. Thompson finds it troubling that the Selectmen want to control the rates. In order to set the rates one has to understand all that is entailed in running and maintaining a utility. Great effort has been put forth and to see things go backwards would be troubling. We are now renewing the assets. Years ago when revenues went to the general fund the town collected the revenues but didn't put anything back towards upgrading infrastructure.

Chair Thompson commented that the water surcharge idea that is being discussed will cause the water bill to skyrocket. Additionally, not everyone in town is billed for town water. The 3% fund idea or the tax rate could also be utilized. Thompson favors the 3% funding idea.

The Board discussed possible scenarios regarding the formation of a Board of Water & Wastewater. Vice Chair Gonsalves would like to see a separate enterprise fund for wastewater created. It was mentioned that Link Hooper may be a good candidate to appoint to the Board since the wastewater project will involve so many roads cuts. Chair Thompson relayed that perhaps storm water could also stay with the DPW since they are currently in charge of it.

Clerk Carreiro expressed that water and wastewater should stay together and that the Board should consist of 5 elected members where in the event that any chair cannot be filled the Board of Selectmen have the authority to appoint a representative to that chair until someone else is elected. Carreiro commented that Link Hooper is already on another Board so he didn't know if Hooper would be available to sit on a Board of Water & Wastewater as well.

Clerk Carreiro asked Town Administrator Clark if he was now in favor of the Board of Water Commissioners continuing on due to the proposed dissolving of the Board that was

presented a few months back. Clark commented that he works for Selectmen and if they set a policy he articulates what the Selectmen want. At that point in time, the Selectmen wanted to see more fall under the control of Administrator, with the Board of Selectmen ultimately overseeing things, but leaving all the day to day work to the professionals. Things transition over time and if you have a functioning elective body you don't just pass it off to an administrator as it's more important to get two bodies to merge into one like water and wastewater.

Discussion began regarding the reasoning behind the proposed Charter changes going to legislature first versus taking the vote to Town meeting. If the proposed Charter changes were to be approved by legislature the changes would go into effect and therefore would not have to go to town meeting for a vote.

Clerk Carreiro motioned to assume all responsibilities associated with wastewater and also to combine water with wastewater and be the governing body. In addition, the Board feels that the Board of Water & Wastewater should consist of a 5 member elected board where in the event that any chair cannot be filled, the Board of Selectmen have the authority to appoint a representative to the chair until someone is elected. Vice Chair Gonsalves seconded; 3-0-0


The Board of Water Commissioners will present this governance model to the Board of Selectman at their meeting on Monday evening, September 14th, 2015.

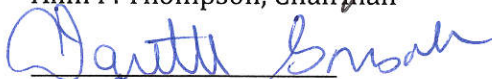
Town Administrator Clark recommended also that the Board work with the Attorney to make sure all of the elements of a sewer commission get into the Charter to give them this authority.

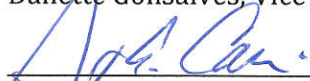
The Board will meet again on Thursday, August 20th, 2015.

Chairman Thompson motioned to adjourn at 8:20 a.m. with a second from Vice Chair Gonsalves; 3-0-0

Respectfully submitted,


Allin P. Thompson, Chairman


Danette Gonsalves, Vice Chair


Gary Carreiro, Clerk


Dan Pelletier, Superintendent


Tracey Alves, Board Secretary